

**POSTING DATE: JUNE 15, 2008**

**Law Clerk to the Justices of the Land Court**

**JOB DESCRIPTION  
2009-2010**

Beginning on June 15, 2008, the Land Court Department of the Massachusetts Trial Court will be accepting applications for one-year clerkships commencing in September, 2009. The court expects to hire seven clerks. The Land Court is located at 226 Causeway Street (North Station), Boston. The Land Court, a trial court of special jurisdiction, provides an unparalleled opportunity for significant research and writing experience, observation of courtroom practice, and working closely with one justice for the duration of the clerkship. Land Court clerkships are particularly rewarding to those with interests in land use and real property law, and candidates who demonstrate such interests are strongly encouraged to apply.

Land use cases involving zoning and subdivision law comprise a substantial portion of the Land Court's docket. The remainder of the Court's docket includes cases involving title or boundary disputes, and other aspects of real property law. The Land Court's jurisdiction extends to the entire Commonwealth. While the justices of the Land Court sit primarily in Boston, they also sit elsewhere in Massachusetts to conduct trials and motion sessions. Trials in the Land Court are without juries.

Each year the Land Court hires law clerks to serve a term of one year, with occasional opportunities for a second year of service. Each of the justices will select a law clerk to work specifically with that justice. Law clerks work closely with their justices on all aspects of the Court's proceedings. Duties include attending court sessions, performing legal research, preparing memoranda on cases and legal issues, and drafting decisions and orders. Topics of research include not only substantive questions of law, but also questions involving rules of civil procedure and evidentiary issues. Land Court law clerks emerge with a solid grounding in general civil courtroom practice.

The Land Court seeks candidates with outstanding research and writing abilities and interest in land use and real property law. Such abilities and interest may be demonstrated by course work, research, employment, internship, or other appropriate experience. Other qualities of successful candidates will include high motivation and the capacity to work with the justices and other court employees, to handle a number of assignments simultaneously, to work quickly when necessary, and to exercise good judgment and discretion. Strong computer skills are essential, and fluency with excel and word is helpful.

The Land Court invites applications from law students who will be graduating in 2009, as well as from recent graduates. Clerkships are open to distinguished graduates of law schools throughout the country. Massachusetts residency is not required at the time of application, but law clerks must reside in Massachusetts when their clerkships commence. Candidates must also have graduated from an accredited law school by the time their employment begins. Massachusetts bar membership is not required for Land Court law clerks.

The Land Court is committed to nondiscriminatory hiring and employment policies.

The starting salary is currently \$47,018.74. Benefits include a subsidized health, dental and vision insurance program.

**LAND COURT CLERKSHIP  
APPLICATION PROCEDURE  
2009-2010**

Applicants should submit the following:

1. Cover letter.
2. Resume.
3. Official Law School Transcript/Academic Record. The transcript should cover the applicants first two years (three years for evening students) in law school and bear the registrar's seal. Please do not submit unofficial copies.
4. Two Short Writing Samples. The writing samples should demonstrate the applicant's ability to analyze legal issues and apply legal principles to factual settings. Writing samples need not be lengthy; five to seven page samples are sufficient. Writing samples must be solely the work of the applicant and may not have been edited by another.
5. Two Recommendations. Two personal letters of recommendation should evaluate the applicant's research, analytic and writing abilities, and character. A letter addressed "To Whom it May Concern" will be accepted only if it is dated after January 1, 2008, and assesses the applicant's legal skills.
6. Completed Trial Court Application. The form may be obtained at any trial court department or at the following web sites: [www.state.ma.us/courts](http://www.state.ma.us/courts) or [www.mass.gov/courts](http://www.mass.gov/courts).

For your materials to be considered, they must be received by **4:30 p.m., Friday, September 26, 2008.** Incomplete applications will not be considered. The court, however, in its discretion may accept later filed letters of recommendation. Interviews will begin in late September, so it is to your advantage to submit a completed application as early as possible. Hiring decisions will be made by the end of the Fall, 2008.

Completed applications should be sent to:

Deborah J. Patterson  
Recorder  
Land Court  
226 Causeway Street  
Boston, MA 02114

Questions should be directed to Ellen Fiandaca at (617) 788-7515, or by e-mail to  
[ellen.fiandaca@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:ellen.fiandaca@jud.state.ma.us)

The Land Court is an equal opportunity employer.



## PREPARING YOUR LAND COURT CLERKSHIP APPLICATION

### 1. Research and Writing Experience.

A Land Court clerk must possess exceptional legal research and writing skills. Valuable research and writing experience may be gained by writing and/or editing law journal articles, working in summer law clerk positions, internships, co-op positions, part-time legal work, serving on moot court boards, or through clinical programs.

### 2. Cover Letters.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to highlight your experience, interests, talents, and individuality. You may also wish to emphasize your interest in land use issues and to explain why you seek a clerkship at the Land Court, in particular.

### 3. Resumes.

Resumes should include an applicant's education, school activities, law-related jobs or internships, and any additional experience involving legal research and writing. Resumes may also include non-legal jobs, community activities, military service, and any other biographical information you believe to be relevant. Honors, awards, and scholarships should be noted, as should any publications.

### 4. Academic Credentials.

An applicant's superior academic record is important to the Land Court. However, we also value other measurements of achievement by highly motivated applicants who have demonstrated their research, analytic, and writing skills in law school and law-related employment.

### 5. Writing Samples.

Applicants must submit two writing samples. A sample need not exceed five pages, although longer samples are acceptable. A portion of a longer memorandum, paper, or article is acceptable. The subject matter of the sample need not be land use or real property law. Samples must be solely the work of the applicant, unedited by others. Briefs or opinions signed by someone other than the applicant should not be submitted.

Writing samples are a critical part of your application. We look for demonstration of an applicant's ability to analyze legal issues and apply legal principles to factual settings. Good organization, clarity of expression, adept handling of authority, and correct citation form are all important.

### 6. Recommendations.

Applicants must submit two letters of recommendation. Additional letters are acceptable. You may submit letters from professors, employers, or both. In reviewing applications, we find it helpful to read evaluations of your work and character from both an academic and work-related point of view. If you were recently employed or are currently working in the legal profession, we suggest that you ask your employer to write a letter on your behalf.

The strongest letters of recommendation are those in which the writer is well familiar with the applicant's work, and can attest to the applicant's research, analytic, and writing skills based on direct personal knowledge.